

Amendment to the Claims:

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt, said apparatus comprising a rigid planar member having a front side and a rear side and a plurality of perforations extending from said front side to said rear side, said perforations being spaced and aligned in the form of a first ~~shape-ring~~ suitable for stretching and drying said pelt, wherein each of said perforations is ~~capable of~~ releasably ~~securing~~ receives a nail, [[so]] such that said pelt is ~~securable-secured~~ to said apparatus by ~~driving-inserting~~ nails through said pelt and sliding pointed ends of the nails into said perforations.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a plurality of second perforations extending from said front side to said rear side of the rigid planar member, said second perforations being spaced and aligned in the form of a second ~~shape-ring~~, such that said second ~~shape-ring of perforations~~ is positioned inside of said first ~~shape-ring of perforations~~.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 11, wherein said first ~~shape-ring~~ is oval.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 12, wherein said first and second shape is rings are oval.

15. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 11, wherein said rigid planar member is a sheet of plywood.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 11, wherein at least one of said plurality of perforations is

bevelled so as to ease the entry of the pointed end of one of said nails into said perforation.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 11, wherein at least one of said perforations is angled relative to a normal projecting perpendicularly to said front side of said rigid planar member to provide assurance that the nails do not slide out of the perforations as the pelt dries.

18. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 16, wherein at least one of said perforations is angled relative to a normal projecting perpendicularly to said front side of said rigid planar member.

19. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 11, the apparatus further comprising ~~at least one nail, wherein said rigid planar member is associated with said at least one nail and said associated nail has a sharp tip~~ a plurality of nails which are inserted through the pelt and into a corresponding perforation.

20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 11, ~~the apparatus further comprising at least one nail, wherein said rigid planar member is associated with said at least one nail and wherein~~ at least one of said perforations has a diameter which is slightly greater than ~~[[the]]~~ an outside diameter of ~~[[said]]~~ an associated one of the nails such that the associated nail is slidable in the perforation.

21. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~making an apparatus for~~ stretching and drying a pelt comprising the steps of:

positioning, on a surface of a rigid planar member, a template, said template comprising a sheet material having a plurality of markers printed thereon,

said markers being spaced and aligned on the template in the form of at least a section of a shape suitable for stretching and drying the pelt;

forming perforations for receiving nails in said rigid planar member using said template as a guide, said perforations being sized to have perforation diameters larger than outside diameters of said nails;

passing a pointed end of each of the nails through the pelt; and

inserting the pointed end of each nail that has passed through the pelt into one of the perforations.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~making an apparatus for~~ stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 21, wherein said shape is oval.

23. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~making an apparatus for~~ stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 21, further comprising the step of forming a bevelled edge on each of said perforations prior to inserting a pointed end of one of the nails.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~making an apparatus for~~ stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 21, wherein said step of forming perforations in said rigid planar member includes forming said perforations at an angle to a normal projecting perpendicularly to said surface of said rigid planar member, the perforations being angled away from a center of the shape such that the received nails do not slide out of the perforations as the pelt dries.

25. (Currently Amended) A kit for making an apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt comprising:

a template comprising a sheet material having a plurality of markers printed thereon, said markers being spaced and aligned on the template in the form of at least a section of a shape suitable for stretching and drying the pelt; and

a plurality of nails,

wherein the template defines locations for forming perforations through a rigid planar member which each slidably receive a pointed end of one of the

nails, the perforations being tilted such that the nails do not slide out of the perforations as the pelt dries.

26. (Previously Presented) A kit for making an apparatus for stretching and drying a pelt as claimed in claim 25, wherein said shape is oval.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) The use of the apparatus as claimed in claim 11, to stretch and dry a pelt on one of said front side and said rear side.

29. (Previously Presented) The use of the apparatus as claimed in claim 28, further comprising using the apparatus to simultaneously stretch and dry a second pelt on the other of said front and said rear side of said rigid planar member.